

U.B.C. Planning Papers



School of Community
and Regional
Planning

University of British Columbia
Vancouver, British Columbia



ISSN: 0828-2404

**Immigration and Ethnic Conflict
in Metropolitan Vancouver:
Challenge and Response**

H. Craig Davis CS #20
Thomas A. Hutton October 1989

U.B.C. PLANNING PAPERS
Comparative Urban and Regional Studies #20

School of Community and Regional Planning
University of British Columbia
6333 Memorial Road
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5
Canada

H. Craig Davis
Professor

Thomas A. Hutton
Adjunct Professor

School of Community & Regional Planning
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B.C.



IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN METROPOLITAN VANCOUVER: CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

Abstract

Asian immigration, particularly from Hong Kong, into the metropolitan Vancouver region has become a heated issue in recent months. An attempt is made here to document the decline of the British majority in the region and to set forth the perceived costs of the increasingly visible flow of Chinese immigrants. Some broad scale actions to minimize ethnic conflicts are suggested and the current principal responses of both the Vancouver public and private sectors to deal with these conflicts are reviewed.

What, for Vancouver, is tomorrow?

The answer: to call what is taking shape here startling is an understatement. Vancouver, barely past its 100th birthday, is going to become an Asian city. [*Globe and Mail* February 20, 1989]

1 Introduction

Historically, the populace of metropolitan Vancouver has consisted of a dominant majority of British origins and a minority of richly mixed ethnic backgrounds with a strong Asian component. In recent years there has been a significant decline in the British proportion of the population resulting partially from a marked increase in immigration into the region of off-shore Chinese. While the benefits of this immigration have been heralded by many within the region, the pace and nature of the resulting change have proven to be a considerable source of anxiety to others. The primary purposes of this paper are to examine the changes over time in the ethnic diversity of metropolitan Vancouver, the perceived problems arising from these changes, and the potential and actual responses to these problems. In promoting the net advantages of increased multiculturalism directly linked to immigration into the region, public officials are faced with a number of challenges. As the Director of Planning for Vancouver's sister city of Los Angeles recently observed, the social problems currently arising in the city from foreign investment and immigration have pushed staff firmly into the area of community education. [Topping 1989]

The shifts in Vancouver's ethnic composition, particularly the increased proportion of Chinese in the regional community, can be attributed to three fundamental elements: international economic and political forces; the nature of Canadian immigration laws; and the region's various locational characteristics. On the international level, Vancouver has been profoundly affected by the process of globalization of the world's economy—the increasing interdependencies between national economies through the expansion of trade, investment and the operations of multinational enterprises. Consonant with the globalization process has been a remarkable shift in both the Canadian and B.C. economies from the traditional U.S. and European markets to that of the emerging Asia Pacific. By the early 1980s Canadian exports to the Asian Pacific Rim countries exceeded, for the first time, exports to Western Europe. Only twenty five years earlier Canada's European trade had been 3.5 times that of our Pacific trade. [McGee 1983]. In the initial quarter of 1989, British Columbia's exports to the Pacific Rim surpassed for the first time those to the United States. This shift in

economic orientation toward the Asia Pacific has implications over the long run for immigration into Canada and particularly into Vancouver, Asia's Canadian gateway.

Over the immediate past and for the remainder of the century, however, an undoubtedly more important international factor determining migration into Vancouver is the political and economic uncertainty caused by the reversion of the British colony of Hong Kong to mainland China in 1997. This uncertainty has prompted many Hong Kong residents to emigrate and others to purchase off-shore real estate and businesses to facilitate future emigration should such a move prove to be desirable. The anxiety associated with continued residency in the colony has been markedly increased recently by the British government's declaration of large scale Hong Kong immigration into the U.K. as a "political impossibility," and by the recent events in China. On the day following the so-called "Beijing Massacre" of June 4, 1989 the queue of Hong Kong residents seeking immigration information from the Canadian consulate extended over several city blocks. In 1988 Hong Kong was Canada's prime source of immigrants, supplying 23,000 of the 160,000 admissions, and this year the proportion is expected to rise. [Fladell 1989] Currently, the Canadian Commission in Hong Kong contains the nation's largest foreign immigration office.

A set of factors complementary to these international forces increasing demand for emigration to Canada are the recent changes in Canadian immigration laws. One such change has resulted from Canadian policy to attract entrepreneurs into the country. In order to induce such immigrants, high priority of entry is granted by an Immigration Regulation of 1978 to one

who intends and has the ability to establish, purchase or make a substantial investment in a business or commercial venture in Canada that will make a significant contribution to the economy and whereby employment opportunities will be created or continued in Canada for one or more Canadian citizens... [Canada 1985, 2(1) Regulations, pp.2-3]

The Business Immigration Program, a federal/provincial initiative instituted January 1, 1986, gave further emphasis to entrepreneurship by granting the status of investor to any immigrant who has a net worth of at least \$500,000 and is willing and able to make a three-year investment of \$250,000 (\$150,000 in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces) in a provincially approved project. [Canada Employment and Immigration 1985] The steadily increasing stream of immigrant entrepreneurs into British Columbia is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Business Category Immigrant Landings in B.C., 1981-1988

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Bus. Immig.	227	270	440	699	986	1239	1773	2872

Sources: Central Statistics Bureau, B.C. Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations

In his study of Chinese emigration from Southeast Asia, Goldberg [1985, p. 47] observes that

[The] United States and Canada are perceived in very favorable light since both have rather liberal immigration policies for so-called "entrepreneurial class" immigrants. Immigrants under this classification are not subject to normal immigration quotas and are considered instead on an individual basis. The possibility of landed immigrant status

arising from admission under the entrepreneurial class is of growing importance to Hong Kong residents who fear their loss of independence should they become Chinese citizens in 1997.

Important as the "entrepreneurship" designation in immigration legislation has been to the flow of Hong Kong residents to the Vancouver region, of far greater significance in terms of sheer volume have been those provisions which permit immigration into Canada for purposes of family reunification. Highest priority is granted to immigrants in this category.

The third basic influence promoting Vancouver's ethnic mix and, in particular the region's Chinese population, is Vancouver's geographic location and amenities. Metropolitan Vancouver is the entry point or gateway to Canada from the Asian Pacific Rim. International immigrants are frequently attracted to areas where there exists an established ethnic base of countrymen to ease the transition to the adopted country. Such a network of family and friends is particularly important to the Chinese who rely heavily on this network in the conduct of their business affairs.

Vancouver is thus a prime magnet for Chinese immigration since its concentration of Chinese residents is second only to San Francisco in North America. The size of the existing Chinese settlement in Vancouver, in conjunction with region's political stability and excellent educational opportunities, accordingly attracts the major share of Chinese immigrating under the family unification provision. Chinese immigrants who qualify as entrepreneurs find the region additionally attractive because of the region's volume and diversity of economic opportunities and its still inexpensive real estate compared with other cities of the Pacific Rim.¹

In short, globalization, political uncertainty in Hong Kong, Canadian political stability and immigration laws, and Vancouver's location and diversity of amenities are all factors promoting international migration, particularly of ethnic Chinese, into the region. In the section to follow the decline of the British majority is documented. Section 3 sketches the history of Chinese immigration into the province and the resulting racial frictions. The major costs and benefits of recent Chinese immigration into metropolitan Vancouver as perceived by the majority population are discussed in section 4. Actions and programs to promote multiculturalism in the Vancouver region are considered in section 5. Some conclusions are then drawn with respect to the roles that civic officials can play in minimizing ethnic conflicts.

2 The Decline of Vancouver's British Majority

As can be seen from Table 2 below, Vancouver has changed from an area whose population was overwhelmingly of British stock to a metropolis characterized by "multiculturalism." From 1911 to 1941 the proportion of the residents who traced their ancestry to British origins remained stable at approximately three-quarters of the population. By 1981, however, the proportion had declined to less than half.

From the 1880s until the 1960s, the Asian presence in Vancouver remained significant but relatively small. In 1961, the Asiatic population was only 3.2% of the metropolitan Vancouver total. The proportion of the population that considered themselves of British stock declined to just over 62%, however, because of immigration into the region from the Mediterranean countries of Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal and the continued immigration of the Germans and French. From

Table 2: Metropolitan Vancouver Ethnicity 1911, 1941, 1981

<i>Origin</i>	<i>1911</i> (,000)	<i>%</i>	<i>1941</i> (,000)	<i>%</i>	<i>1981</i> (,000)	<i>%</i>
British	91.8	76.1	274.8	78.2	612.1	48.9
Chinese	3.9	3.2	7.9	2.2	83.8	6.7
Germans	3.5	2.9	6.1	1.7	74.0	5.9
French	2.3	1.9	8.2	2.3	36.8	2.9
Scandinavians	3.4	2.8	14.1	4.0	35.9	2.9
Indo-Pakistanis	7.3	0.6	—	—	34.8	2.8
Italians	2.5	2.1	4.4	1.3	30.7	2.5
Ukrainians	—	—	2.3	0.7	29.3	2.3
Netherlanders	—	—	4.1	1.2	28.2	2.3
Pacific Islanders	—	—	—	—	15.1	1.2
Japanese	2.5	2.1	—	—	11.7	0.9
Polish	—	—	3.2	0.9	11.5	0.9
Jewish	1.0	0.8	2.9	0.8	11.4	0.9
Native Indians	—	—	0.3	0.1	10.9	0.9
Hungarians	—	—	0.7	0.2	8.1	0.6
Portuguese	—	—	—	—	8.0	0.6
Greeks	—	—	—	—	6.2	0.5
Czech/Slovaks	—	—	0.9	0.3	5.4	0.4
Russians	—	—	3.3	0.9	5.2	0.4
Other/Unspec.	9.0	7.5	18.3	5.2	191.9	15.4
Total	120.6	100.0	351.5	100.0	1250.6	100.0

"—" = not separately identified in census

Sources: 1911: Robinson [1988]; 1941, 1981: Censuses of Canada

the 1960s onwards, there has been a significant increase in Asian immigration into metropolitan Vancouver.

The proportion of Chinese in metropolitan Vancouver more than doubled over the period 1911-81. The increase is considerably more dramatic in the City of Vancouver proper where the Chinese proportion of the population climbed to 15% in 1981 and has risen significantly since then.

About 85 percent of the population of Greater Vancouver lives in the urbanized core. Many ethnic groups are distributed over the region in similar proportions. However, the Chinese, Japanese, Czech, Italian, West Indian, and Jewish are more likely to live in the urbanized core, while the Dutch, Scandinavian, Finn and Ukrainian have settled more often than the others in the rural fringe. [Lioy 1975, p.30]

In contrast to the metropolitan region's population of British origin, which throughout the region's history has come primarily from elsewhere in Canada, approximately three quarters of Vancouver's Chinese immigrants² have come from overseas, primarily from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Viet Nam and other Southeastern Asian countries rather than mainland China. [Robinson 1988] By 1986 the Chinese population in metropolitan Vancouver exceeded 100,000 and, as shown in Table 2, had increased to 7.3% of the metropolitan population.³

3 The Perceived Benefits and Costs of Immigration

Depending on its volume and composition, the flow of immigration into a region can have extensive economic impacts.⁴ The addition to the population affects both aggregate economic demand and supply. Immigrants directly increase demand for various consumer commodities and through their numbers and particular needs cause an increase in government spending as well. To the extent that they bring capital and business acumen into the region, immigrants will add to the flow of investment spending. Investment expenditures may also be expected to increase as existing local commercial activities add to capacity to meet the increased consumer demand. Further, the expanded local market may lead to additional local production and investment through import substitution.

On the supply side, immigrants add directly to the region's labor force. Through the increase in investment that results from immigration, the region's capital stock is expanded. Aggregate supply in the region may also be affected by increases in entrepreneurship and technological advance resulting from immigration. Economic impacts on the region may further ensue from the interaction of aggregate demand and supply via changes, for example, in the region's job mix, income distribution and rates of growth, unemployment and inflation.

In addition to these economic impacts there are of course a variety of potential social impacts which result from the flow of newcomers into the region. Similar to the economic impacts, the social impacts depend substantially on the composition and volume of the immigration stream. Unlike the economic influences, however, the social dimension is considerably less subject to measurement. The social benefits and costs of immigration are often difficult to conceptualize, let alone quantify, as they involve changes in attitudes toward and relations between various groups within the regional community and possibly in the way the community perceives itself. Immigrants bring to the host community new philosophies, perspectives, beliefs and lifestyles which may influence the established culture in a myriad of subtle and complex ways.

In the discussion to follow, no pretense is made of fully understanding the various social and economic influences of immigration on the Vancouver region. In the attempt to delineate the principal impacts, the authors rely heavily on their perceptions of the principal foci of public discussion and accounts in the local press. As in the preceding section, the focus in this section is on the Chinese since this particular immigrant ethnic group has been the center of attention with respect to the region's concerns regarding immigration. Emphasis in the discussion is placed on the cost side since it is the perceived costs which lead to the conflicts arising from immigration.

3.1 Benefits of Immigration

In the Vancouver metropolitan region the economic benefits that have been attributed to immigration have focused principally on the skills and expertise of the immigrants, the capital they bring with them, and the links they establish with other countries through their history, language and culture.⁵ These benefits have been considerable in magnitude, particularly in the areas of real estate, manufacturing and international trade.

3.1.1 Real estate

The acquisition of local commercial properties appears to be a common objective for Asian immigrants in Vancouver, particularly the Chinese.

Brick and mortar have traditionally been a symbol of confidence to the Asian. The recent property boom in Hong Kong and Taiwan have brought to most immigrants new appreciation of the value of their personal assets. As a result, investment in real estate in Canada is at the top of their investment priorities. [Yuen 1988]

The funds injected into the local real estate market open new opportunities for construction and development and contribute to the renewal of the physical stock of residential, commercial and industrial structures. In Vancouver a substantial portion of these funds have been channelled into housing and into hotel and other tourist-related properties.

3.1.2 Manufacturing

The size of the domestic market, and the prospect of unlimited access to the U.S. market via the Free Trade Agreement has encouraged a number of immigrants to the Vancouver region to set up plants to produce goods that were formerly produced in their home countries. Of the operations initiated by recent Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs in the region, garment plants have been particularly prevalent. As would be expected, a number of immigrants have elected to invest their capital in existing manufacturing enterprises in order to take advantage of the knowledge of local business people.

3.1.3 International trade

Many Chinese immigrants bring with them an extensive knowledge of the business conditions and practices of their former homelands and begin to add to this base an expanding familiarity with market conditions of the new homelands. Many immigrants to Vancouver, particularly those from Southeast Asia, have substantial backgrounds in trading activities and thus have the capacity to

capitalize on their experience to expand markets both locally and abroad. For these immigrants, import/export activities are a natural attraction. Their activities promote increased international trade and thus benefit local consumers through new and cheaper products, local business people through expanded business opportunities, and local labor through increased employment opportunities.

3.2 Costs of Immigration

The perceived costs of immigration to Vancouver, both real and potential, can be summarized in five major categories:

3.2.1 Job displacement

Immigrants are often seen as taking jobs that would otherwise be held by locals. This view is widely held, for example, in the Miami area with respect to Cuban and Haitian immigration and in Southern California in regard to the influx of Mexican labor. Although this issue has arisen repeatedly in earlier eras, it has not been prominent in recent public discussions in Vancouver. For the most part, the common perception appears to be that immigration into the region is resulting in a net addition to employment for local residents.

3.2.2 Congestion and pollution

Immigration, as well as in-migration (domestic immigration) and natural population increase, add to the numbers of people in a particular geographic area. Increased numbers translate into higher living densities, increased traffic and travel times. It also means larger crowds at those recreation sites which cannot easily be duplicated in the area. For leisure-oriented Vancouverites, this means larger crowds at the beaches, ski slopes and the regional parks. An expanded populace and a corresponding increase in the volume of motor vehicles has adverse consequences as well for Vancouver's air quality, which in recent years is becoming more of a publicly recognized problem. These concerns with the growth process, to which immigration contributes, has caused many Vancouverites to look askance at the changes that are occurring in their city.

3.2.3 Strains on the educational system

Immigration, both domestic and international, affects educational planning in at least three ways. First, in terms of sheer number it may play a major role in planning in the immediate future for the supply of educational facilities and human resources. Second, through its impact on the proportion of females in the population, the general fertility rate, and in particular the age structure of the population, immigration may be a significant factor in the longer-run planning for educational needs. Third, immigration, particularly international immigration, may have a substantial effect on educational planning through the demands placed on the system for teaching English as a second language (ESL). It is this third area that has been the subject of considerable public discussion in metropolitan Vancouver—particularly the city of Vancouver, where at the present time slightly over half of the 50,000 students in the Vancouver school system have a mother tongue other than English. Approximately 10,000 of these students are receiving ESL training.⁶

There are presently ninety-eight specialized classes in the Vancouver city school system which focus exclusively on ESL. These classes are segregated from the regular educational stream and are

spread over a number of schools. Because of the expense of these classes, the Vancouver School Board is considering the recommendation of a recent task force report to abandon these classes in favor of integrating all ESL students into regular classrooms.

ESL students are rapidly becoming the norm in Vancouver schools rather than the exception. Thus, all teachers will be required to address the learning needs of ESL students...to bridge the gap in academic aspects of English, every teacher in the school must be prepared to make a long-term commitment to support ESL students' progress by individualizing their instruction to take account of the very different levels of English proficiency and the different rates of learning represented among these students. [Ashworth et al 1989]

Implementation of this such a recommendation generates serious concerns among parents in the larger population that too much of teachers' time is devoted to ESL rather than academic subjects.

Immigration policy in Canada is entirely the domain of the federal government. Educational policy is the responsibility of the provinces. Although the demands for ESL are a direct result of federal immigration policies, to date no federal funding has been made available to provinces or local school boards which must develop and implement the programs to meet these demands. The problems generated from this division of responsibilities has yet to be resolved.

3.2.4 Real estate prices

For the past two years it can be readily asserted that the most pressing problem associated in the public mind with immigration to Vancouver has been the rapid price increases in the housing market. The following is a sample of recent items in the local, national and international press:

In Vancouver, the frenzied real estate market has buyers lining up in some neighborhoods and paying more than \$1 million cash for houses that would have sold for half the price a year ago.

...Real estate agents are wooing Asian buyers—some meet planes arriving from Hong Kong to take their clients on house tours. [Vancouver *Sun* February 18, 1989]

Transpacific migration into Vancouver is expected to continue at high levels for at least the next 20 years, radically altering the city's currently dominant European face. Hong Kong, China, Vietnam and India are the four leading source countries of immigration for the city.

The Hong Kong immigrants are of a different breed from the usual new arrivals: they're rich....Choice blocks of condominiums are being built that are sold only to Hong Kong buyers. Old houses are being bulldozed and replaced by unattractive megahouses for Hong Kong buyers. Hong Kong investment—about \$800 million a year in the province, most of it in Vancouver—is gobbling real estate. [*Globe and Mail* March 1, 1989]

A wave of immigration from Hong Kong to Canada has brought prosperity—and racial problems—to the largest city on Canada's Pacific Coast.

...Luxury apartments and tall buildings all over downtown have been purchased by Hong Kong money, but the biggest stir developed when the city's real estate market caught fire. Prices doubled and tripled in a year—and so did real estate taxes.

Suddenly, Vancouver's neighborhoods, always the heart and soul of any city, were affected. Old, single-family houses were sold at what seemed to be huge prices and were torn down to be replaced by what Vancouver people call "monster houses." [San Francisco *Chronicle* July 3, 1989]

As suggested by the above newspaper reports, there are two basic reasons why the recent changes in the Vancouver real estate market have come to be so closely linked in the public mind with immigration, particularly that of Hong Kong Chinese, despite a number of statements by public officials and academics that the overwhelming share of newcomers to the region are from other parts of Canada. First, the Chinese immigrants are more visible to the white majority than are immigrants of European heritage. Second, the visibility of recent Chinese immigrants, particularly those from Hong Kong, has been enhanced by the fact that a significant number have entered the region at the upper end of the income scale. Rather than traditionally settling in areas of relatively modest economic circumstances, they have moved into some of the region's wealthiest neighborhoods. The 'abrupt' arrival of these immigrants, frequently in conjunction with the demolition of long-established houses as mentioned above and their replacement with houses of a distinctly different size and character, has alarmed a segment of the more articulate, vocal and politically influential of the region's populace.

In short, domestic and international immigration into Vancouver has undoubtedly contributed to the upward pressure in land and housing prices in the metropolitan area, especially in the City. This pressure is unfortunately correlated by many with the simultaneous influx of Chinese immigrants, who have been visible beyond their numbers.

3.2.5 Economic and cultural domination

If immigrants begin to acquire significant representation in the entrepreneurial class of an economy, concerns among the local populace regarding the "take-over" or "domination" of the immigrant group are inevitably raised. To the extent that immigrant entrepreneurs refrain from joint ventures with local business personnel, favor old-country business practices and customs, and conduct operations in their native language, these concerns are intensified.

Undoubtedly, some portion of the concerns expressed in the city with regard to real estate and education problems extend to concerns of economic and cultural domination. This is likely to be particularly the case with respect to the Hong Kong Chinese immigrants in view of their recent increase in numbers, the degree of participation in local businesses at the management level, their entry into the wealthier neighborhoods, and the academic achievements of their offspring in the local schools. Further fueling these concerns is the uncertainty regarding the pace of immigration from Hong Kong in the future, in light of the present uneasiness of many Hong Kong residents regarding the 1997 transition of the city-state to the political authority of mainland China. While there are undoubtedly many Vancouverites who harbour such anxieties, to date these concerns have not, with minor exceptions, been openly articulated.

4 Actions to Promote Multiculturalism in Greater Vancouver

As sketched above, the metropolitan area has a long history of discrimination against its Asian minority and with the influx of Hong Kong Chinese, unpleasant reminders of this past are occurring with a disquieting frequency. A June, 1989 report to the Vancouver city council prepared by the city manager has stated that recent immigration has caused Vancouver residents to become exceedingly uneasy about the future. "The existing community believes that its heritage and institutions are being displaced in many ways." The report went on to say that "a 'we-they' mentality is developing between the existing community and new arrivals, which is even impacting on Asian-Canadians who have lived in Canada for many generations." [Vancouver *Sun* June 28, 1989] As a first step in dealing with the problem of ethnic conflict in Vancouver, the problem must be explicitly recognized.

Once recognition has been made, the second step is to allocate the resources necessary to ensure a broad-scale monitoring of the various facets of the problem. What is the nature and intensity of ethnic sentiments between the various segments of the community? To what kinds of ethnic conflicts or 'incidents' do these sentiments give rise? With what frequency and in what contexts do such incidents occur? Which particular groups are the victims of these incidents and what are their responses? Attempts to answer questions such as these on a periodic basis would provide useful data for constructing community-wide efforts to resolve ethnic conflicts.

A third step in dealing with the problems of ethnic conflicts involves discussion and education. The community needs to discuss the problem in its schools, churches, community centres, professional organizations, social clubs, cultural associations and in public meetings specifically arranged for the purpose of considering community relations.⁷

Interwoven into these discussions must be an educational process. The economic and social benefits of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism should be made widely known within the community. This task is, of course, the responsibility not only of social planners and community workers but of politicians, business and labor leaders, educators, church officials, and others in the community who are in positions to influence public opinion. Public statements can be made, for example, via media interviews, official publications, letters to editors, public service announcements, addresses to schools and social clubs, and in meetings, such as those mentioned above, which are specifically organized for the discussion of existing and latent ethnic conflicts within the community.

In addition to publicizing the beneficial aspects of multiculturalism, efforts should be undertaken to correct misunderstandings and misconceptions associated with particular ethnic groups and with the immigration process. For example, as previously mentioned, there is in Vancouver a broadly perceived causal relationship between the recent general rise in house prices and Hong Kong immigration. While this immigration undoubtedly does add to the housing demand, it is, as Vancouver's social planning director has recently argued, but a "small proportion" of the people moving into the region. (On the provincial level, there were 19,616 Canadian newcomers in the first nine months of 1988, compared to 4327 from Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan). [Vancouver *Sun* February 20, 1989]

Just as long-time residents of Vancouver must adopt a measure of understanding and tolerance of the cultural differences between themselves and new Canadians of various ethnic backgrounds, so must the differences be fully understood and appreciated by immigrants.⁸ For example, a Chinese immigrant's belief in Feng Shui⁹ philosophy that leads him to cut down the trees on his property must come to realize the potential conflict that such an action may cause with his neighbors, who traditionally place a high value on their trees and gardens. Similarly, a newly constructed

house with stone walls and iron gates may be less than welcomed in a neighborhood in which open yards and gardens have long been the norm. Information concerning cultural differences may be disseminated in the immigrant's home country by the Canadian consulate and in Canada through cultural associations.

In a recent address to the Urban Development Institute, Vancouver resident and former federal trade minister Pat Carney argued that the responsibility for "harmonious neighborhoods" is also the responsibility of developers who should "explain to new arrivals what features will generate discord and hostility in their neighborhood and which features will be welcomed." [Vancouver Sun March 23, 1989] Indeed, in many cases the developer's actions fall far short of this responsibility. Trees and shrubbery are bulldozed along with existing houses to permit construction of homes to the absolute maximum allowed by zoning by-laws, homes that are out of character with the surrounding neighborhood.

This is the focus of the resentment...Most of the Chinese buyers...simply buy the house the developer offers...not realizing that they are purchasing a house, a lot, and the load of hostility the developer has created. [Ming Pao Daily News September 2, 1989]

Finally, it must also be recognized that increased discussion and education about cultural differences can only reduce and not eradicate ethnic conflicts. Cultural differences, no matter how well they are understood, will still inevitably lead to conflicts between neighbors within the region. To the roles of discussion leader and educator for the public official may be added that of mediator. While it is imperative that the number of ethnic conflicts be minimized, mechanisms must be set in place to mediate swiftly and fairly those that do occur.

5 Multiculturalism and the City of Vancouver

It has been only in the last twenty years that multiculturalism and problems of immigrant and ethnic minority populations have generated positive, organized responses in Vancouver.¹⁰ As part of the broad social changes that originated in the sixties, these responses began to emerge in the early 1970s. With short-term federal government financing, a number of projects were undertaken which involved English language training, multilingual preschools, cultural orientation, programs for mothers and children, employment training, etc. Although these efforts represented a distinct departure from the past, they were all tied to short-term grants and ended when the grants expired. A pervasive recognition of the city's growing multicultural aspect was yet to come. As late as 1976, for example, there was vigorous debate over the need for an interpretation service for the police department's emergency 911 service. The issue was brought before city council on three separate occasions.

As the immigrant and ethnic communities continued to expand, a general recognition of the needs of a more diverse urban population began to emerge. There now exists a widespread acceptance by the general community of the need to provide immigrants with assistance in the adaptation process, in particular with a knowledge of language and culture essential for the workplace. Services specifically for immigrants are currently an integral part of the City's social services.

There are four principal organizations in the city which provide general settlement services (e.g., welcoming, referral, general information, translation and counseling) as well as limited ESL, some types of employment, and job-finding programs. Each of these organizations draws clients throughout the metropolitan area.

- *Immigrant Services Society*. ISS has a language bank of 45 languages and dialects. It provides basic welcoming and orientation for immigrants and acts as a conduit for the funding of new programs for immigrants. It is the major provider of services for government sponsored refugees.
- *MOSAIC*. MOSAIC has become the primary multi-lingual settlement agency in the city. It provides services through staff to at least 18 language groups, oral interpretation in over 70 languages, and written translation to 35. The organization is extensively computerized, making information readily available, and has recruited Board members with extensive experience in business and program analysis.
- *OASIS*. This organization began as a community/tri-level government cooperative project designed to address problems arising from ethnic conflict, particularly in south Vancouver. The range of settlement services provided has since expanded considerably, but the organization retains its original focus on the Indo-Canadian community.
- *SUCCESS*. SUCCESS is the principal service and educational agency for the Chinese speaking community. Its services include educational newspaper columns and radio programs; crime prevention programs, senior and youth services; vocational training; bilingual ESL classes; and family service and counselling programs.

Complementary to the above four organizations are a number of smaller organizations which provide support programs to particular groups. For example, emergency assistance to refugee claimants is provided by the Inland Refugee Society. The Chinese Community Library Services provides a library, reading room, archival centre as well as mobile services to seniors throughout the region. The Pacific Immigrant Resources Centre and the Pre-school Multicultural Services both serve the needs of immigrant families with pre-school children.

Also indicative of the change in the attitude of the general population toward the ethnic communities are the changes in mainstream public service institutions. As examples,

- The Vancouver Police Department has instituted a number of changes including an outreach policy for recruitment of visible minorities and extensive multicultural training programs for existing staff as well as recruits.
- The Vancouver Health Department has translated health information into various languages, has allocated staff to work with community organizations on multicultural health issues, and has developed several outreach programs in a number of languages.
- The Vancouver School Board has created the Multicultural Home School Workers Program to assist school staff, students and parents with various problems that arise because of language or cultural differences.
- The Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services organization, in recognition of the complexity of multicultural problems, is actively recruiting bilingual and bicultural staff to deal with these problems.

In addition to these relatively newly established organizations for settlements services, minority-targetted programs and development of ethnic oriented services in mainstream government agencies,

there are two recent responses to the challenge of managing a multicultural urban society that are particularly noteworthy: the public sector's proposed Hastings Institute and the private sector's Laurier Institute.

5.0.6 The Hastings Institute

One of the responses to the frictions arising from increased immigration into the region is a proposed organization, the Hastings Institute, which would develop, deliver and evaluate a range of training and consulting services to promote the management of multicultural diversity and employment equity. In a recent report to the Vancouver city council, the City Manager's office articulated the need for the proposed institute by stating that

at this time Lower Mainland citizens perceive that change is occurring at an excessive rate; that cultural values of existing citizens and new arrivals clash; that the education of Canadian children is being compromised by the emphasis on ESL programs; and that both the rate and type of immigration which is occurring are depriving local citizens of housing opportunities. Significant community issues are developing, and timely leadership is required to avoid the development of overt problems. [City of Vancouver 1989]

The Hastings Institute would be a private corporation wholly owned by the City of Vancouver, with the Board of Directors appointed by the Vancouver City Council and the Mayor as chairman. Representation on the Board, however, would extend to the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the United Way, the Vancouver School Board, business and labor organizations, and key community groups. Of the proposed budget for 1989/90 of \$626,000, \$150,000 would be contributed by the City for operating costs, a matching amount would be provided by the Federal Government for program development and analysis, \$50,000 would come from the Provincial Government for program delivery, and the balance would be met by training fees and private sector contributions.

The range of services to be provided by the Institute include referral services for training and development programs already available in the community, training follow-up services, and assistance in organizational development. Central to the proposed services is a residential training program that is already in place and is based on the "Kingswood" model developed by Metro Toronto.

The program involves an intensive five-day simulation exercise in which participants are assigned the roles of senior managers in the mythical municipality of Kingswood. In these roles the participants are confronted with a range of real world problems that arise in the course of managing a multi-ethnic work force and in delivering services to a similarly diverse community. Seminars and lecture sessions are organized to lend assistance to the participants in dealing with the issues presented. The primary objectives of the program are to sensitize senior management to the problems of dealing with ethnic minorities and those with special needs and to provide training to meet these problems.

At the end of the program, the participants are expected to return to their positions in government and to initiate projects reflecting the aims of the training program. On-going assistance is available provided by the training staff as well as previous graduates of the program. Periodic meetings among participants are also arranged to discuss progress achieved and problems encountered, and to maintain a climate of commitment.

The City has also organized programs within specific departments which range from one to three days. Personnel collaborate with graduates of the Kingswood program to discuss examples of real issues involving departmental staff. Work groups are established to devise ways of dealing with these problems and to identify additional issues requiring attention. Among the proposed programs to be considered for adoption are ones designed for intercultural training and the recruitment of minorities for non-traditional positions.

5.0.7 The Laurier Institute

The Vancouver private sector has responded to the challenges of creating a harmonious multicultural society by establishing the Laurier Institute, a federally chartered, non-profit society with no political or commercial intent. The organization's aim is to be exclusively funded by private sector contributions, and its avowed purpose is to "contribute to the effective integration of the many diverse cultural groups within Canadian society into our political, social and economic life by educating Canadians of the positive features of diversity." [Laurier Institute 1989] Toward this end the Institute has appointed a panel of specialists from a variety of academic disciplines to develop, in cooperation with the Board of Directors, a plan of research activities. As its initial research effort, the Institute has created a videotape, "Growing Up Asian and Native Canadian," with the guidance of a number of educators. It is currently in the process of developing an associated curriculum. Working with an advisory committee from the Vancouver School Board, the Institute intends to introduce the material into 11th grade social studies within the Vancouver city school system.

As of fall 1989, the Institute has initiated in conjunction with the U.B.C. Faculty of Commerce a study of the factors responsible for the increase in housing costs in Vancouver. The study is funded by the Real Estate Foundation of Vancouver. Other studies scheduled to be initiated include the impact of ESL programs on indigenous and immigrant students, factors for the successful integration of minority groups into Canadian economy, and the processes of immigrant integration in terms of society's capacity to deal with diversity in terms of numbers and types of people.

6 Conclusion

From its early development until recent years metropolitan Vancouver has been largely populated by British stock, but the region has also long contained a sizeable Asian presence. From the 1960s onward, however, the percentage share of British majority has been declining. Simultaneously, there has been an upward trend in the proportion of Chinese in the region. Three sets of conditions—international economic and political forces, Canadian non-discriminatory immigration laws, and Vancouver's diversity of amenities—practically ensure a continuous flow of Asian newcomers, particularly Chinese, into the metropolitan region well into the twenty-first century.

The Vancouver region will derive a number of social and economic benefits from this flow of immigrants. Unfortunately, however, the increase in the heterogeneity of ethnic backgrounds of the region's population inevitably leads as well to conflicts between various groups and individuals within the region. In dealing with these conflicts, the range of problems arising from increased immigration and multiculturalism must be explicitly recognized and publicly discussed. Resources must be allocated to the monitoring and resolution of the conflicts. Means must be institutionalized

to distinguish between fact and hearsay, to minimize the frequency and intensity of conflicts, and to address quickly and satisfactorily those conflicts that do occur.

In recent years, the response of both the public and private sectors in Vancouver to the challenge of large-scale immigration and increasing ethnic diversity has been positive and encouraging. Leadership in both sectors has created a climate which bodes well for the future. While this response is reassuring, the challenge is clearly an on-going one to which continuing efforts must be directed, given both the highly dynamic nature of the immigration process and the fundamental character of the resulting social changes.

The Vancouver experience suggests elements of one practical model of how the complex and potentially divisive issue of rapid ethnic change within an urban area can be addressed. For example, action may be taken to develop constructive public forums designed to address openly the problems arising from immigration and ethnic diversity. Translation services might be offered at such meetings and immigrants and ethnic minorities encouraged to attend. Encouragement can be given to the development of a number of organizations providing general settlement services, as well as to smaller-scale support programs targetting particular groups. Outreach programs can be instituted into mainstream public service agencies. A public sector institute can be created to develop and deliver a range of training and consulting services designed to promote the effective management of multicultural diversity. Such an organization can also play an important role in coordinating the range of government efforts directed to reducing ethnic conflict. A complementary private sector institute designed to promote research into the various aspects of ethnic diversity and to offer educational services to the community based on this research is also an important element of the Vancouver model.

There is, of course, scope for a number of additional measures to be undertaken. For example, a general social "accounting" of the costs and benefits of immigration might be developed and continuous efforts undertaken to monitor trends and changes in the various categories. Efforts can be made to encourage the channeling of immigrant investment into areas of highest socio-economic returns. Zoning by-laws can be amended to insure that newly constructed housing retains to an acceptable degree the desirable characteristics of the neighborhoods in which it is built. Courses on Canadian history and culture can be integrated into existing community educational extension programs. Overall, continuous efforts must be made to deal directly with the anxieties of long-time residents of the region, to provide welcome and guidance for newcomers, and to reduce tensions between the two segments of the populace.

Ultimately, of course, the successful accomodation of immigrants from the Asian Pacific and elsewhere will depend largely on the goodwill and adaptability of the host community as a whole, and on the attitudes, values and flexibility of the immigrants themselves. In light of developments outlined in this paper, however, the Vancouver experience suggests strongly that local government and other public and private sector bodies can take both leading and supportive roles in facilitating the 'blending' of established and newly-arrived groups in the metropolitan area, upon which our socio-economic well-being increasingly depends.

Notes

1. For example, total operating expenses and base rent for office space are currently \$35 /sq. ft. in Vancouver compared to \$80 in Hong Kong and \$207 in Tokyo. [BOMA 1989, p.33]
2. For histories of Chinese immigration into British Columbia, see Tien-Fang 1931; Norris 1971; Ward 1978; Collins 1979; Roy 1980, 1989; Special Council 1986; Anderson 1986; MacDonald 1987; Yee 1988.
3. The ethnic background of Vancouver's population in 1986 is not reported in Table 2 since the data from this latest census are not directly comparable to those of previous censuses. For the 1986 census the wording and structure of the question regarding ethnic background were changed in such a way as to substantially encourage responses indicating multi-ethnic origins. [Census Canada 1986a, pp.XL-XLI; 1986b, p.35]
4. National concern over immigration has prompted the Economic Council of Canada to initiate a multidisciplinary study of the impact of immigration on Canadian society as a whole. The results are expected to be available in late 1990. [Au Courant 1989]
5. Formal analyses of the potential economic benefits derived from immigration can be found, for example, in de Avila 1954 and Parai 1974. While these benefits are in general difficult to quantify, some data are available on capital flows. For example, it has been estimated that under the previously mentioned Business Immigration Program, an estimated \$800 million of investment was stimulated in Canada by Hong Kong immigrants in 1988. [Fladell 1989]
6. According to a 1986 survey, the countries providing the major share of non-Canadian born students were, in declining order: Hong Kong, People's Republic of China, Vietnam and India. [Vancouver Sun February 10, 1989]
7. The mayor of the City of Vancouver has recently acted positively in this regard by organizing a series of public meetings designed to address directly the issues of race relations and ethnic conflicts within the city. In addition some training has been provided for officials of the city (including the Vancouver Police Department) and other municipalities.
8. Toward this end the University of Hong Kong has recently instituted an eight week course on Canadian culture for potential immigrants. [Vancouver Courier October 4, 1989]
9. Feng Shui is a conception of locational "rightness" that may influence the follower's choice of residence in terms of such characteristics as site, orientation, address, and architectural detail. For example, common aspects of a house that contribute to a good Feng Shui are stairs that do not come down to the front door, a bathroom and backdoor that are not visible from the front door, a minimal number of trees on the lot, and an address containing one or more eights but no fours. [Larsen 1989, p.26]
10. This section draws heavily on Shearer (1987) and information provided by Christine Warren of the City of Vancouver's Social Planning Department.

References

- [1] Anderson, K. 1986. "East" as "West:" Place, State and the Institutionalization of Myth in Vancouver's Chinatown, 1880-1980. Vancouver: Ph. D. thesis, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia.
- [2] Ashworth, M., J. Cummins and J. Handscombe. 1989. *Report of the External Review Team on the Vancouver School Board's ESL Programs*. Vancouver: Report prepared for the Vancouver School Board.
- [3] Au Courant. 1989. *Immigration: Measuring Costs and Benefits*. 10(1): 14-15.
- [4] BOMA BC and NAIOP Vancouver. 1989. *British Columbia Office and Industrial Leasing Guide*. Spring. Vancouver: Skyline Industries Ltd.
- [5] Canada. 1985. Immigration Act R.S.C. 1976. Ottawa: Queen's Printer.
- [6] Canada Employment and Immigration. 1985. *Business Immigrants*. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services.
- [7] Census Canada 1986a. 1988. *Profiles: Vancouver*. Catalogue 95-168. December. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services.
- [8] Census Canada 1986b. 1988. *Reference Census Handbook* Catalogue 99-104E. June. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services.
- [9] City of Vancouver. 1989. Manager's Report on the Creation of the Hastings Institute. Vancouver: June 2, 1989.
- [10] Collins, D. 1979. *Immigration: the Destruction of English Canada*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: BMG Publishers Ltd.
- [11] de Avila, A.C. 1954. *Economic Impacts of Immigration*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- [12] Fladell, M. 1989. "The Immigration Boom: Business Immigration to Canada," *Lifestyle*. Chinese Edition. September, 29-34.
- [13] *Globe and Mail*. February 20, 1989. "Face of Vancouver to be Radically Altered."
- [14] *Globe and Mail*. March 1, 1989 "Is Vancouver Trading Furs for Beads?"
Can Be Seen in Its Schools."
- [15] Goldberg, M.A. 1985. *The Chinese Connection*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- [16] Larsen, K. 1989. "Housing and Locational Preferences of International Migrants Entering the City of Vancouver," School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Unpublished.
- [17] Laurier Institute. 1989. *Unity Through Diversity* Vancouver.

- [18] Lioy, M. 1975. *Social Trends in Greater Vancouver: A Study of a North American Metropolis*. Vancouver: Social Policy and Research Department, United Way.
- [19] MacDonald, N. 1987. *Distant Neighbors*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University Of Nebraska Press.
- [20] Ming Pao *Daily News*. September 2, 1989. "Racism and Real Estate."
- [21] Norris, J. (ed.) 1971. *Strangers Entertained: A History of the Ethnic Groups of British Columbia*. Vancouver: British Columbia Centennial '71 committee.
- [22] Parai, L. 1974. *The Economic Impact of Immigration*. for Canada Manpower and Immigration. Ottawa: Information Canada.
- [23] Robinson, J.L. 1988. "Vancouver: Changing Geographical Aspects of a Multicultural City," *BC Studies*. 79 Autumn: 59-80.
- [24] Roy, P.E. 1980. *Vancouver*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Co.
- [25] Roy, P.E. 1989. *A White Man's Province: British Columbian Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- [26] *San Francisco Chronicle*. July 3, 1989. "Asian Immigrants Enrich and Scare Vancouver."
- [27] Shearer, R. 1987. *A Review of Immigrant and Ethnic Services*. Vancouver: report prepared for Social Planning Department, City of Vancouver.
- [28] Special Council Committee on Race Relations. 1986. *At First a Dream: One Hundred Years of Race Relations in Vancouver*. Vancouver: Social Planning Department.
- [29] Topping, K. 1989. "The Planning Implications of Pacific Rim Investments in Los Angeles," an address to the Conference on Urban Development in the Pacific Rim, Los Angeles, August 8.
- [30] *Vancouver Courier*. October 4, 1989. "Canadians Quiet, Shy."
- [31] *Vancouver Sun*. February 18, 1989. "The Hong Kong Connection."
- [32] *Vancouver Sun*. February 10, 1989. "Revamped System Urged as ESL Students Multiply."
- [33] *Vancouver Sun*. February 20, 1989. "Planner Urges Tolerance."
- [34] *Vancouver Sun*. March 23, 1989. "Newcomers Urged To Adopt Our Values."
- [35] *Vancouver Sun*. June 28, 1989. "City Warned of 'We-They' Mentalities."
- [36] Ward, W.P. 1978. *White Canada Forever*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- [37] Yee, P. 1988. *Saltwater: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre.
- [38] Yuen, N. 1989. "On the Rebound," *Annual Investment Guide*. Spring: 61-62.